I: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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OREOOREO

776 Geiseler (87, p. 16) was told that the name of the human figure with conventionalized big eyes, painted on a slab at Orongo, was the god Oreoореo. This is the only mention of such a god in Easter Island traditions.

Lesser Gods

Most of the lesser gods are mere names to us. We do not know even the customary residences of some of them, although all the *akuaku* of high rank were supposed to haunt a particular spot on the island and maintain connections with the people living near by. They were supernatural beings who belonged to a certain district or family. A few of them were real gods, others were demons or nature spirits, and others were spirits of deified dead.

[775] All lesser gods are now grouped under the general term *akuaku*, which is applied also to the spirits of the dead when they appear as ghosts. Minor gods are still designated by a name and given residence and some of them by a personality defined in myths or tales. But any separation of minor gods from spirits and ghosts based on defined personality is artificial and may be imposing a clarity of distinction which never existed. Likewise it is difficult to distinguish between minor gods who were worshipped and legendary characters who were endowed with superhuman power but who never functioned as actual gods. *Akuaku* figures, mentioned in tales, who have no apparent connection with religion and who probably have no independent existence outside of myth, are given elsewhere (p. 318).

Akuaku were both male and female. They were often represented as human beings, who might have been mistaken for ordinary creatures had the story teller not classified them as *akuaku* or *tatane*. They married ordinary men or women, had children by them and died. They could even be killed if their adversary was strong enough or sly enough. At times their supernatural power manifested itself in the ability to fly through the air and change rapidly from one place to another.

774 776 Some *akuaku* were embodied in animals, in natural or artificial things, or in phenomena. Generally the animals were considered as supernatural beasts rather than as spirits transformed into or embodied in animals. Spirits embodied in things or phenomena bear the names of their material representation and probably were believed to have no existence independent of their apparent form. Thus, Te Emu is a "Landslide"; Mata-vara-vara "the Rain-with-heavy-drops"; Paepae-atari-vera "a House."

776 773 Men are indebted to the minor gods or demons for many important discoveries and improvements in their culture. The art of tattooing was introduced by the sons of two *akuaku*—Vie Moko (The Lizard Woman) and Vie

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Kena (The Gannet Woman). The female *akuaku*, in the form of birds, taught men to extract dye from turmeric (*Curcuma longa*). The first bone fishhooks were made by Ure, a capricious and strange character of Easter Island folklore. An *akuaku* bird (the frigate) brought a new kind of yam as a gift to a man called Rapu.

Not all *akuaku* were well disposed toward men. In remote times the island was full of mischievous and murderous demons. Thirty of them were destroyed by a man called Raraku in a temporary fit of madness. The general slaughtering by Raraku did not relieve the land from all its devils, for tales describe monsters, like the Woman-of-the-long-arm, who were constant menaces to men until they were killed. Some demons proved helpful in difficult circumstances. Hiva-karere (The-flying-foreigner), Mata-mata-vara-vara-ahu-Raai (The-rain-with-large-drops-of-the-ahu-Raai), and Paepae-a-Tari-vera (Stone-house-of-Tari-vera) saved a famous warrior (*matatoa*), whose soul (*kuhane*) was kidnapped by another spirit.

Through old Viriamo, some information has come to us about the relations between men and *akuaku*. The spirits or gods of Viriamo's district were Tare and Rapahango. Rapahango was also the family name of my informant, Victoria, who claimed for her ancestors some association with that *akuaku*. Rapahango and Tare were especially well disposed toward the Tupa-hotu and brought their friends in this tribe food they had stolen from other people. In exchange, the *akuaku* received an offering each time an *umu* (earth oven) was opened in a house they favored with their visits. Before starting the meal, the host or some important guest would say: "This is for such-and-such an *akuaku* . . . " I understood that a small portion of the meal was presented to the god or the spirit; but Routledge (194, p. 237) got the impression that "the invitation to the supernatural power was purely formal, or restricted to the essence of the food only."

The spirits had long talks with men or women who succeeded in winning their confidence. They foretold the future, announced impending dangers, and revealed secret things. I was told by Viriamo's son that in her youth Viriamo had been seen at night speaking familiarly with the two spirits, Tare and Rapahango. The voices of these spirits were always high-pitched and recognizable. When the *akuaku* were in a house, those who wanted to have an interview with them or make offerings to them had to crawl into the hut backwards.

15:Routledge E-5 (1914-1915) 1919
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days, and then died. It was not essential to life to have a soul, 776
but you could not really get on comfortably without it. No 773
knowledge survives of any belief or ideas with regard to a future [774]
state. The spirit, it was said, appeared occasionally for five or ten years after a man's death and then vanished.

Pan in the shape of tatane is by no means dead. Not only do such beings haunt the crater of Rano Raraku, but tales are told of weird apparitions at dusk which vanish mysteriously into space.

There were no priests, but certain men, known as "koromaké," 791
practised spells which would secure the death of an enemy, and there was also the class known as "ivi-atua," which included both men and women. The most important of these ivi-atua, of whom it was said there might be perhaps ten in the island, held commune with the aku-aku, others were able to prophesy, and could foresee the whereabouts of fish or turtle, while some had the gift of seeing hidden things, and would demand contributions from a secreted store of bananas or potatoes, in a way which was very disconcerting to the owner.

There was practically only one religious function of a general 796
nature; it was very popular and had a surprising origin. Attention was attracted on the south coast by a particularly long stoep of rounded pebbles measuring 139 feet, and obviously [346]
connected with a thatched house now disappeared. That, our guides said in answer to a question, "is a haré-a-té-atua, where they praised the gods." "What gods?" "The men who came from far away in ships. They saw they had pink cheeks, and they said they were gods." The early voyagers, for the cult went back at least three generations, were therefore taken for deities in the same way as Cook was at Hawaii. The simplest form of this celebration took place on long mounds of earth known as "miro-o-orne," or earth-ships, of which there are several in the island, one of them with a small mound near it to represent a boat. Here the natives used to gather together and act the part of a European crew, one taking the lead and giving orders to the others. A more formal ceremony was held in a large house. This had three doors on each side by which the singers entered, who were up to a hundred in number, and ranged themselves in lines within; in one house, of which a [534]
diagram was drawn, a deep hole was dug in the middle, at the